



## News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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For Immediate Release

### Testing for Radon Can Reduce Your Risk for Lung Cancer

*Free Radon testing kits are available on a first-come, first-served basis*

The [Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders](#), [Greater Somerset Public Health Partnership](#) (GSPHP), [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection \(NJDEP\)](#) and the [Regional Chronic Disease/Cancer Coalition \(RCDC\) of Morris and Somerset counties](#) are partnering to recognize January as Radon Awareness Month. The Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders will issue a proclamation this month.

Radon is an odorless, tasteless and invisible gas that occurs naturally when uranium and radium break down in the soil and in rock formations. Radon gas moves up through the soil and finds its way into homes through cracks in the foundation and openings around pumps, pipes and drains. Radon occurs in higher concentrations in certain areas of the state, including Morris and Somerset Counties.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon is associated with approximately 22,000 lung cancer deaths each year in the United States. According to the RCDC, lung and bronchus cancers are the No. 1 cause of cancer-related fatalities in Morris and Somerset Counties.

Smokers and people exposed to second-hand smoke have a greater risk of developing lung cancer if they are also exposed to excess radon. Radon does not cause any immediate symptoms, such as asthma or respiratory problems, so testing for radon is the only way to know if a home has elevated radon levels.

Residents are advised to decrease exposure to radon to reduce the incidence of lung cancer; go for cancer screenings so problems can be identified at an earlier, less dangerous stage; and learn about the dangers of smoking and second-hand smoke.

"In an effort to reduce the risk of exposure to radon gas, residents are urged to test their homes, said Branchburg Township health officer and GSPHP president Cinthia Weaver. "Even if your neighbor's home is not affected by radon gas, it does not mean that your home is in an acceptable range.

"Also if there has been construction in or near your home, it is important to retest," she said. "If a radon test indicates a radon problem, radon mitigation systems can be installed at a cost similar to other home repairs."

To enable Somerset County residents to test their homes, **free** radon kits will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at various health departments throughout Somerset County until supplies are depleted (some restrictions may apply). Residents should contact their local health department for availability and information on radon-testing procedures and mitigation. A listing of health departments in Somerset County can be found at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/health/localhealth.aspx](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/health/localhealth.aspx).

To learn about other county programs and services, visit [www.co.somerset.nj.us/howdoi.html](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/howdoi.html).

To stay up to date with Somerset County events and information, sign up for free [email alerts](#) at [www.co.somerset.nj.us/subscribe.html](http://www.co.somerset.nj.us/subscribe.html) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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